



forces $\frac{20}{02}$

2002 forces 2002 forces 2002 forces 2002

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C. Helvey

T. Keller (m) C. Ippolito (r)

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BETWEEN MY. . .

C. C. Palo

Rubber Soles

ripped apart.

Rusted tin

A loser's trophy

Wooden spoon

splintered with use

Aromas of fruits

in the rotten juice

*These images captured me as my
eyes scanned the page.*

*I learned that this author's intent
was to teach a lesson*

of humility

*And I thought to myself
that it was wrong to be reading
this intimate short prose
left by the printer in the library.*

for me

I scanned the room

to see

if she was watching

the simplicity

in her words

of confession.

Home

Tiffany Kellerman

*little girl lost
has found her way home
thru the depths of your heart*



I. Starr

CRISIS IN THE PRESENT TENSE

Sandra Starr

A summons
Her companion peeks through bars of light to reveal
A table beneath a canopy of cottonwoods.
An ivory face glows, a withered hand reaches out,
Isolation invites Death to tea.

Portly and rosaceous the "Preceptor of Life" salutes her with his silver
flask.

"Nothing for me madam, I travel with home made brew."
And he tipples the swift narcotic.
Intoxicated, Death's fingers encircle a shrunken arm,
As Isolation recoils.

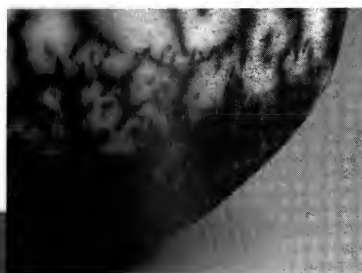
Let us stroll beside these gnarled trunks and rippled waters.
"Where is your trust in blissful mortality?"
With one gesture, water spirals and time retreats.
Death reveals a mournful past.
And Isolation shivers.

Rather too wild? It was not always so.
As Narcissus seals his Songbird in a cocoon.
Quite like Satan, he torments her
With no connection but to himself.
Isolation grieves.

"Why Demise, my cousin, takes his son, and there is no pain."
"Ha!" Death tipples.
And sets the Songbird free.
Addicted,
Isolation offers Narcissus hot water for tea.

Sing. Sing to the rafters.
For once within the villain's grasp
Narcissus steals you back,
Reveling in gifts of love.
Isolation stirs.

Ripples of water turn silken,
And silence becomes the Songbird.
"Isolation, life is a puzzle, you are a missing piece.
May I offer you a tippie instead of tea?"



de novo

Nicole Lynn

it was finished.



S. Adams

but you said that I was tearing you apart,
so I let the corners square off
and I softened to your voice
again.

The Truth – Bone Dry

Mark Eiseman

I have nothing to hide; nothing I can deny. I can tell the truth, now, bone-dry
my road to hell started with one simple question
“Hey, have you ever tried X?” i am the cat curiosity killed
i was too young; with a poison thirst to experience unlimited freedom,
i was unstoppable
a dare - an offer - an invitation
how do i answer – friend or foe

and so i gave in - it was really that easy – though i new better;
Mother always taught,

“JUST SAY NO”

it was a momentous occasion; good or bad, i will never forget. this was the
beginning of my end. i was vulnerable; scared; alone;
surrounded by friends – or foes? i could list the drugs by name, by order of
introduction, by preference, even by severity of side effects -
but details are not necessary

in the end, i had 13 new leaders of my life they controlled my every thought.
i could not escape.

these things they call drugs, i love them.

it's said they “free the mind.” in reality they capture and kill.
i was trapped in a slowly rotting life. i didn't recognize the empty gaze
staring back in the mirror; unfamiliar; ugly; frightening. best described – a zombie.

to justify, morals are run through the shredder thoughts only focus
on the next rush the next pill the next line the next injection
i feel replenished, but how long will it last

i am comforted, but only for a moment.

i live for the moment i have no future
do you know what it's like to have no future to question, every minute, your
very existence to believe, truly, that you are, and forever will be a waste
of space

i am tired weary confused my soul yearns for relief. i want to
escape from my own carcass how can i end it
thoughts of death cloud my mind and so i give up but i do it the right way
I confess; more importantly, I realize and believe my addiction
it has been 10 months now, but it seems like only yesterday
the desire hasn't faded – it will NEVER fade I must not forget

my nose still itches and tingles at every thought of “coke”

drugs will always have a strong hold on my life
I miss those times, I cannot lie whenever I feel stressed, alone, or depressed,
I want to return to my strong devil-friends
but I know better I AM better I have a future
a vision, hope; a sense of purpose I am important

so this is my story, bone-dry, with nothing to hide.

A Kennedy Dies

Dirk Spencer

In non-stormy weather
They fell off the bridge together
He managed to get free
While Mary Jo Wheezed
Remember Karma Comes Back in Threes

For you see . . .
Under a Dallas sky
Bullets fly
While babies cry
To a crowd's surprise
A Kennedy dies

In a kitchen they were surprised
As more bullets fly
Sirhan sighs
Rosey Grier cries
A Kennedy dies

A Cockpit set too high
The airplanes fly
Under a night sky
Ocean waters rise
We know not why
A Kennedy Dies

bed of stars

Claire Shipman

i'm not drunk
but i'm falling down
hard and slow.
can you see my momma?
she never touched a drop
but she tumbled
just the same.

you won't recall
this hand-me-down end
on sterile sheets.
my token will be the words
you find yourself humming.
songs from my mouth spilling
over warm lips.

Elephant Families

Suzanne Rae Desbchidn

We are one big elephant family
Strong women
Born of a line
Of strong women
Will we revisit the bones
Of our fallen
Matriarch
Will we caress them
Taste them
Touch them
As elephant families
Do
When they happen upon the bones
Of their fallen ones
Encircling the site
In defensive posture
Pawing bones with
Mammoth toes
Will we survive
The falling of our
Matriarch
The one who led us
Down the path
To water
And life
Will we allow
Another to rise among us
Or will we beat her down
Elephant families
Continue
As must we

CHILDHOOD IS...

Kelly Zelens

Childhood is entrances.

It is learning, loving, and wanting to grow up.
It is innocence.

Childhood is my blue pickup truck that I must have put a couple of thousand miles on.

It is Clip-Clop, my Munchichi dolls, Cabbage Patch Kids, and my China tea set.

It is Charlie, my favorite stuffed dog my dad gave me when I was two, which I still sleep with.

Childhood is Saturday morning cartoons at 7 a.m., Scooby Doo and Inspector Gadget.

It is Back to the Future and Superman.

It is the Goonies with Sean Astin, oh, how I wanted to marry him.

Childhood is riding horses, playing "Let's Pretend," forts, and swing sets.

It is learning to play soccer and T-ball, and always being the shortest on the team.

It is climbing trees, but somehow forgetting how to get down.

Childhood is music.

It is The Eagles, CCR, The Moody Blues, George Strait, Phil Collins, The Beatles, Fleetwood Mac, Barbra Streisand, and Huey Lewis and the News.

It is Billy Joel and Bruce Springsteen.

Childhood is friendships.

It is sleepovers, fights, daycare, swimming lessons, swim meets, cookouts, and contests.

It is teepees, monkey bars, swings, and old fallen trees.

Childhood is asking when my baby sister was going back to the hospital.

It is learning to enjoy having a younger sister, family vacations, and sharing a room.

It is being the oldest.

Childhood is trying to be just like Daddy.

It is learning Mom will come back to pick you up and cannot always say five minute good-byes.

It is finally growing up and understanding being a child is not always a bad thing, and that you can grow up too fast.

Childhood is exits.

It is learning to develop into a loving and caring adult.

It is realizing that a part of you will forever be a child.



"Gran" Says It All

Kelly Reichelderfer



S. Day

Gran.

With the huge formation
Of silver cotton candy
And dazzling, distinctive delineations
Of artistic design;
Never did she leave her
Immaculate abode without
Her "duds" and "jewels."
Mom said the older Gran became,
The more she put on.

The little ones knew
Cards, surprises, treats,
"Don't tell your mother."

"Girls' night out" comprised
Of Frisch's and either
Wheel of Fortune, Hee Haw,
Or the (in)famous treks
To see Dallas Christmas night confections,
Cruising on fumes on Central
Going 35mph at night.

December 12, 1993 she left us
As my other grandmother had
Exactly 9 years prior. Eerie?

Mom and I have no doubt she's
Grooving to Tony Bennett and Nat King Cole,
Laughing in her angel wings,
Griping that they do not have
Enough gold and glitter on them,
Looking down on her little ones,
Making sure others treat us right.
She was always good at that.

(music notes)

My Gran.....

Barbara Ann.

(music notes)

I'm glad someone wrote a song about her.

EDMUND TELLS NO TALES

Lisa J. Morris

"You know if you don't give it a rest, Ed, you're going to turn into one of these guys!" said Tim. Edmund Masters slowly looked up from the skeleton he was analyzing and smiled back at his friend. Unlike Tim, Ed was tanned from being out in the field and while Tim sported a buzz cut Ed kept his blond hair long and tied back in a ponytail. "Hey, Tim, my man," said Ed, as they high-fived without touching.

"Come on, TGIF man. It's five o'clock, twofers time at Max's! Time to do some damage!" said Tim. "Hey, an Steel Jinx is playin' at the PlowShare tonight so Josh and I and some of the guys are heading out there later. Are you in or are you in?"

"Can't," replied Ed. "Got too much to do."

"You've been working on this stuff for months, it won't kill you to take one night off!"

"Yeah, yeah. I know. But, I can't. I've got to give a paper at the Physicals next month. If I don't finish these analyses I won't have anything to talk about and the Board will start wondering where all their grant money went."

"Well, if you change your mind, you know where we'll be."

"Sure. Thanks."

"Healed compound fracture of the lower left tibia, Level 2 osteophytosis present throughout the vertebral column progressing to Level 3 in L4 and L5." Ed finished the entry into the human paleopathology database and stared bleary-eyed at his watch. It said 3:00 a.m. Sighing, he stretched his arms over his head and cracked his stiff neck with a quick twist. The water and steam pipes above him clanked, and with a faint chill, he thought he heard voices. "Probably mice," he mused.

continued

The anthropology museum's storage facility for human remains was in the basement of the men's gym under the pool. There were always noises — from the pool, from the gym, and from the steam heating system — that warmed the entire campus. Two more skeletons to analyze and he would be done. The facility held hundreds, if not thousands, of mummies and skeletonized human remains from all over the world. And here he was alone on a Friday night locked in the basement with them.

"Oooh weee ooooooh," said Ed aloud. His voice deadened in the vast space of the storage facility. He could never understand people who were afraid of a bunch of old bones and dried flesh. Ironically, at that very moment he would have sworn he heard the voices again — something high pitched and just on the edge of perception. The hairs on his arms stood up.

"Get a grip, Ed, you're giving yourself the willies." A cold chill slammed through him. He shivered as he tried to catch his breath. Involuntarily, he remembered an incident on the Reservation at the end of last fall's field season. It had been cold then, too.

The cold had insinuated itself through the seams of his Gore-Tex coat penetrating its polar fleece lining and his polypropylene underwear. How much longer was he going to have to sit out here? What did the old man want with him? The night sky was painfully clear and the stars too bright to look at. The scent of burning pinion wafted up to them from the houses in the Pueblo below. Ed looked

enviously down the valley at those warm, distant lights. About a half-hour ago he had lost the sensation in every part of his body in contact with the block of ice that was the ground. Who would have thought the damn New Mexican desert could get so cold? Impatiently, he switched the wad of Red Man from the inside of his left cheek to the right and exhaled a hard, white fog of irritation. But, the old man just sat there staring at a distant mesa that glowed in the moonlight. He looked as comfortable as one would have if he were on a sunny beach in Acapulco.

Ed considered himself one of the University of California's brightest and he wasn't the only one who thought so. He hadn't become valedictorian of his undergraduate class by being a wimp. Now that he was a hotshot first year graduate student at UCLA with an unprecedented fat grant, he'd be damned if he'd let himself be outdone by some old Indian geezer. So, he ignored it when his nipples began to sting and turn hard like pebbles and when everything else but his goose bumps shrank and puckered. He clamped his teeth down on his tongue to keep them from chattering.

"The bones of the dead cry at night." The old man said at last. Ed had started in surprise. "If they are disturbed; they cry. Sometimes you can hear them." The old man raised his chin slightly and folded his thin lips over toothless gums never taking his eyes off the mesa. Ed shifted the chew in his mouth again and put his arms back behind him to stretch his back but regretted it immediately when the cold shot into the few warm places left on his body. Crazy old man, Ed thought angrily, and I'm just as crazy for being

out here with him. Now, how am I supposed to respond to this nutty-ass bullshit so I can get back to bed?

"Those bones you archaeologists are digging up," the old man continued, "they need to be reburied." Ed would have snickered if he weren't so cold, instead, he rolled up his eyes as he puffed out his cheeks and exhaled. When he had managed to clear his face of expression, he looked over at the old Indian and caught his breath. An eerie sheen clung to the man's gaunt leathery face. It was still and hard like polished jade. The man's eyes were shadows; his mouth, a slash. Long white hair flowed from his scalp with a strange wild life of its own under the piercing moonlight. The face had become a mask. For a moment, Ed thought he was looking at a Kachina dancer; one of the personators of the Gods who comes to earth in human form. Ed shivered as something colder and darker than the night coiled up his spinal column.

"The spirits of the dead must continue their journey. They cannot do so if their bodies are in museums and universities being poked and prodded. They suffer. It is desecration. You understand? You must return them to their home." Ed did not want to get into an ethical argument at this time of night, so he lied and said "yes." The old man grunted and nodded his head. He got up slowly and Ed trailed after him as they hiked down to the road where one of the old man's granddaughters patiently waited for them in a warm car. No words were spoken until he thanked her when she dropped him off at his trailer on Black Rock. The field season was over; his students had packed all the equipment yesterday, and tomorrow—well today now—they would be leaving the Reservation.

*"The
bones
of the
dead
cry at
night."*

Ed shook himself out of his reverie. "Focus Ed," he said aloud. Those Indians and their superstitious BS. Crying bones, right. But, to his disgust, he found himself straining, listening for any sound above the knocking on the pipes. He got up a little unsteadily with the drawer of bones he had been analyzing. A hollow, weak sensation like a yawn bloomed in his gut as he started down the long narrow corridor passing row upon row of shelves full of human remains from Ethiopia, California, Egypt, and so on. The New Mexican collection was just beyond the Peruvian mummy section.

He took short, shallow breaths as he listened superstitiously for more noises. Naked bulbs glared surreally above him reminding him of the stars above the Reservation that cold, fall night. The familiar scent of moist dust that invariably clings to excavated remains grew stronger. Heart beating in his ears, he passed the Peruvian mummies, their desiccated black arms and hands with fingernails still intact, reached out beyond the shelves. With macabre grins, filed teeth and luxuriant black hair they almost looked alive though folded into drawers too small for them.

Slowly, he continued down the corridor feeling light headed as his heart pulsed louder. "It's all in your head, it's all in your head Ed, old boy, get a grip." Trembling, he spun around as he heard a soft moan like the wind through an ill-fitting window. Had it come from the Peruvian mummy section behind him? He froze and held his breath. Straining to hear beyond the deafening roar of rushing blood in his ears. Higher sounds like the screaming of mice now. It was getting louder. What was happening to him? Tim had been right. He must have been working

too hard nothing else could account for this. Maybe he should have gone out tonight. As his heart beat faster he felt himself growing weak and clammy. He had to get outside—into the fresh air. He had to find the exit. Now! The screaming was building and to his horror Ed thought that he could distinguish words. It became deafening, like a macabre THX test gone deadly wrong. He tried to stuff bits of his T-shirt into his ears with his free hand but nothing helped. He had to go back; back past the mummies get to the exit. Taking a deep breath, he retraced his footsteps. The muscles in his arms shook, as the drawer of bones grew heavier. A furtive glance down the first isle revealed a full row of mummies staring malevolently back at him from empty eye sockets, their bodies, twisted, and contorted, fingers pointing, accusing. For one eternal second, he couldn't catch his breath; then, he dropped the drawer tripping over it as he tried to run. He fell and hit his head on the cement floor.

When Ed woke, he was stiff and more tired than he had ever remembered being. He stretched, but found that straightening out his body was beyond him. His vision was blurred but when he went to blink his eyes the lids would not move. His tongue felt like a walnut and a violent thirst threatened to overcome him. Where was he? If he could just get his mind to focus. As his vision slowly cleared he realized he was up high looking down, at what? Drawers of sticks? Out of the corner of his eye he could see his blond hair cascading over the platform he seemed to be on. He lay on his side in the fetal

position. But instead of his healthy arms and legs all he saw were light-colored desiccated limbs extending out from his body. His watch hung loosely like a bracelet on his skeletal wrist. He looked across the isle and found he was positioned so he was on eye level with the grinning face and folded body of one of the Peruvian mummies. "Welcome," it said continuing to grin. Ed began to scream.

Tim followed Dr. Saddler, Dean of Anthropology; into the analysis area where he had talked to Ed last Friday evening. "So, Dean Saddler, you haven't seen Ed all day either?"

"No, he missed teaching his Anthro. 101 class. Sheri, the Collections Manager found the box of bones on the floor at about 8:00 a.m. this morning. The door to the storage facility was still locked, the lights were on and so was Ed's computer. In fact and all of his things are still here but no sign of Ed."

Ed heard voices. It was Tim and Dean Saddler. "Over here," he shouted. "Tim! Dr. Saddler! Over here. Help me! Help! Oh, God help me!" Other voices chimed in growing louder and louder as Ed tried to shout over them to his friends.

"What's that sound?" asked Tim.

"Mice or rats," said Dean Saddler. "No, matter what we do we can't seem to get rid of them."

Fire Ant Field

Toby Wallace

Sprinklers are now brushing their love upon a
spoiled football field
Where one High school team will fall in defeat
each and every week.
The players will spin their dreams like a
September leaf in a whirlwind
Scattering them upon the dry rotted ground of
a whole other field.
They will not play on the glorious field where
winning and losing reigns,
But rather a field where misery and suffering
will remodel them.
What?
You are at Fire Ant Field.

Each day,
Players will part with their comfort zones once
they exit the field house
And feel the Texas heat as it seeps through
their pores and cooks them.
The humidity will reach out and spit a coat of
slime upon their gear
As the sun begins to charbroil each helmet
during the warm-up drills.
They will see putrid grass that is weeping dry
tears from the lack of rain
And the dry black dirt that is crying out from
within its deep cracks.
What?
You just got here, friend.

After warm-up,
Each player will go to his respected position
where he will be expected
To punish his sweat brothers in a fight to
become the master of the drill.
They will be insulted by a barbaric and often
obese dictator who desires
Only to coach those who skin their knees and
lick the sour yellow grass.
The drills will be like miniature circuit type
divisions of an earthy Tartarus
Where the player will learn to cry often and
loathe their fellow classmates.
What?
You want to quit?

In the Oklahoma drill,
The young men will learn that football is just
Death wearing shoulder pads
Ready to equip each individual with a torn
faded jersey of embarrassment.
Men will circle around warriors in a squared
area who try to destroy the one
He bleeds on still listening to his own breath,
filled with shrieking asthma.
Others will hide, scared speechless in the back
only prolonging the abuse
To avoid a drill that is a hazy labyrinth of
scattering, eye irritating still life.
What?
Ya scared?

Finally,
The water break is here but only to keep the
participants from slipping away
Into eternity thus quickening their spirit which
at one point had not a pulse.
There are pipes spewing hot water in all
directions where players herd
But fight to splash their hanging tongues and fill
their helmets with splendor.
The coaches stand appalled as his gladiators
show these signs of weakness
Only to uplift a sarcastic laugh from one who
seems glued inside a golf cart.
What?
You're pathetic.

After the break,
It is time to learn the playbook as a collision
course is now being drawn
In a rugged soil filled with ugly mistakes that
cripple unsuspecting ankles.
A prep team full of hard young talent will now
lose control of their bladders
When they are thrown in an outdoor dungeon
against the pride of the school.
This will happen several times each day
between the other drills Hates has
To prepare the fair haired Varsity for a divisional
team that will kill them.
What?
Why don't ya cry?

After many an hour,
The torture begins to threaten the teen as he
struggles with various conflicts
That pit him versus himself, others, and nature
that attempt to finish him off.
The fresh blood will join the crimson stains on
his pads and add character
To a beaten and battered body that glistens
with quarts of profusive sweat.
Every fiber in each player's being will be needed
as fire ants and mosquitoes
Arrive stinging in multitudes and the hot Texas
breeze now insult the sores.
What?
Keep fighting.

In the end,
The youth will soon listen to a long winded
speech from the head coach
On their knees paying respect to everything
that had just challenged them.
They will then dream about the game field and
its vast meadows of glory
But mostly they will dream about past times
that are non-football related.
They will be thinking about the Coke machine
while admiring their wounds-
And then they will leave Fire Ant Field.
What?
Go home. You're done.

S. Benoit



Delayed reaction caused by Canalization

Justin Clark

She wore an American flag for a t-shirt
her name was Sarah
and I saw her as a fictions character in a novel
by King or Chricton
too many layers and thoughts
too much description
she seemed to glow with the pride of her country
and I saw no reason why at the time

days ago a plane crashed into the world
trade center
and I worked at making quality coffee
and as thousands watched another fly sideways
into its sister
I frothed a mocha

these things have a way of making you paranoid
walking to the car
looking to the sky
thinking your house has the shadow of a 747
on it

we can all pray right?

as I read the morning newspaper
the word trade center collapsed
and as I threw away the grinds of latte's past
the twin did the same

and a thousand people died
and I balanced my checkbook
and I wanted to drive my new car

a smooth black '99 Volkswagon Beetle with
tinted windows and a 6 cd changer in
the back

commodities
make the world
go round

All day

I wanted to go home
and by the time I did
three buildings were gone

She asked me for an American flag
her eyes were green -and-
I told her to take off her shirt
she reminded of the kind of girl you would take
home to mother and then leave her there
if you like her so much
keep her mom
please
she seemed to know nothing of what life really
was
and I wanted to tell her everything

days ago the president spoke for a third time
and I stood in the hallway of my college with
my peers
and I listened to every word
and I looked at their faces

we are pale in the comparison of real life
we are sad in the realism of the truths inside
we are listening
and waiting
and worrying

what will become of it

as she left she said "God Bless"

I told her

sometimes it rains
and that means God's crying

it's probably something you did

and she was gone

Days ago the twin world trade centers fell to
the ground
and I never really saw it
and I never really knew

and now it's time to finally let it sink in

to let it wear me down

till I'm nothing

SHACKLED

Lillie Vermillion

Turning aimless circles in a swivel chair.

I'm the only one left.

The last of the office personnel.

The last of the staff.

The last one here.

So I swivel in the turning circle of
my chair.

And I am waiting...

for the Alpha of the G to call me.

They will give me glad tidings
of much work.

Then I must put my paper-cut fingers to the task.

I will toil and slave
over what will ultimately be trash.

When the task is complete
and the trash is assembled,

only then am I released to show up late at home.

So I wait.

Circling in the turning swivel of my chair.



C. Helvey

D-dad

Roxanne Geib

I don't remember your smile
I don't remember your bird watching skills
 (although I've seen the results)
I don't remember your sense of humor
I don't remember your stories
 (although I've heard the tales)
I don't remember your like of photography
I don't even remember being called princess Rocky

However

I do remember the sound of your voice
I do remember "helping" you cook
 (mostly I remember nibbling on the
 ingredients to your dishes)
I do remember the way you smelled
and the feel of your hugs
I do remember picking you up from some
 building and for some reason I only
remember you wearing white

but most of all, more than
the rest, I remember the way
 you didn't come clomping
down the steps to answer the door



S. Day

I Never Saw the Trees Before

Molly Boyce

I never saw the trees before until their shade was thin.
My eyes looked toward the sun, the blessing I was in.
But falling leaves cover the ground, reminders of the past,
And the sun hides underneath the dark cloud's overcast.

I never saw the trees before their limbs hung so bare.
I struggled to protect myself against the cold winter air.
Whipped within the stormy gales, they kept their self-control
While Mother Nature taunted them in a battle for their soul.

I never saw the trees before their small buds burst alive.
I sought the dignity of my own new birth as spring arrived.
But the trees stood tall in the faint warmth of promised sun
Spreading new growth ever upward, aware they had overcome.

I never saw the trees before they bowed toward the earth.
I toiled under a heavy weight without seeing their worth,
Content to watch the moon and stars encircle heavenly ways,
Never worrying about next season or learning to count the days.



A Steel Bitter Gray

Anne West

Below
 lies the sidewalk,
A steel
 bitter
 gray,
 fallen gravestones
 on black sodden earth.

Brittle leaves red-burgundy-brown
 crackle like bird bones
 under the walker's feet.

Clouds black and heavy with rain
 moan softly.

Winds whisper failure...failure...failure...
 Like a slowing heartbeat,
 a fading wisp of tule fog.

The footfalls stop
 and the walker looks up
 with mirrored eyes
 as a tear drops
 from
 the sky.

Translucent

J.A. Goodrich

You are the fortunate one

You are everything I am
 without the responsibilities.
I work out everyday and eat right
 So you look "athletic"
I wake up early to do what I need to do
 So you look professional
Shower, shave, and match
 Just so you're trendy

And how do you stay trendy
 I read every magazine in the supermarket
I have time to do that while I'm grocery shopping
 For your dinner.
You have all the same experiences I do
 Without the disappointment and heartache

I work sixty-hour weeks
 So you can live in this upscale apartment with a view.
I go out and party almost nightly
 Just so you can stay popular
I'm tired of this
 Can we just trade jobs for awhile
I would give it all up just to let you see how it felt
 On my side of the glass

Jesus Says Wash My Car

Justin Clark

For punishment – Dad takes me to wash his car

For three minutes and thirty seconds – four quarters
For another minute added on to that – another quarter

This is how these things work
Instead of gumballs
you get soap and water
wax
tire cleaner
all out of a metal hose with a trigger

So he pumps the quarters in and I hold the hose
he stands there feeling the off spray of the water

He says
Any job worth doing is worth doing well
You put your all into something you believe in
and you do good work
That's how you get ahead in life
That's how you get above

I aim and fire the stinging pelts at the car door

He says
I find that when you do a job
any job
if you do it for Jesus
you'll do the best work you're capable of

I soap up the windows and stop to look at him

He says
Do it with your love for Jesus
Do it for him

I am silent with concern and puzzlement

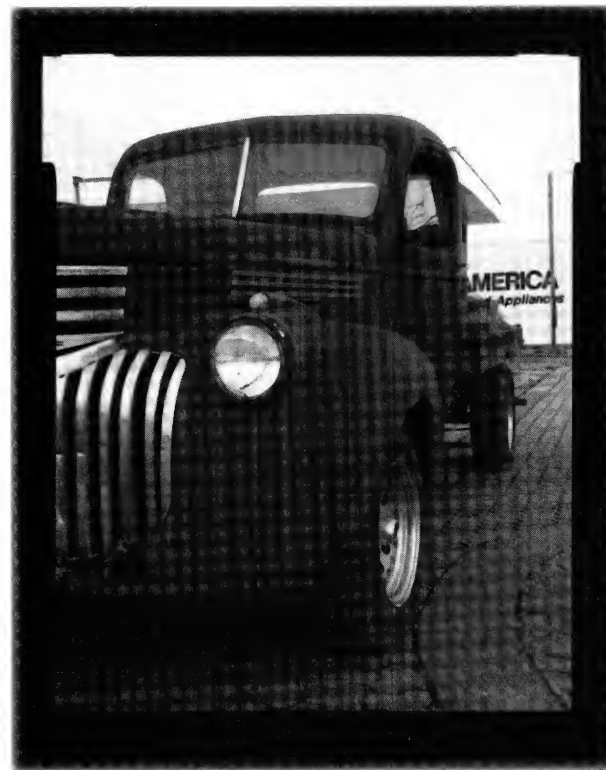
I continue to spray ignoring him

Since when has he become renewed in his faith?
Since when has he worked word for God?

Not when he was drinking
or hitting me

Dad pumps in fifty more cents

He says
Make sure you get under the tires



W. Gollitue

and I think
for Jesus right?
and I'm on me knees in my best jeans
getting soaked by the back splash

He says
You see if you have that in mind – you can't fail in his eyes
and you can't be weak about anything

and I wax the bumper and rub off dry bird crap
for Christ Himself

Dad says
It works in ways you couldn't believe
as he dishes out another dollar

and I wonder if my Mom files papers for Emmanuel
if my sister serves food for the Son of God
or if my Dad invests in bank bonds with the King of the Jews on mind

I sure don't sit people as a host and then say

Here is your seat, Jesus Christ Amen
Enjoy your meal

and I soap the hood
and I spray the trunk
and I towel dry the whole car
for my Lord and Savior

Father says
For Jesus – everything is possible double time
Every day is wasted without Him

And I feel this day was wasted

shining the hood
and waxing the mirrors
spraying the suds

and washing them off

Baptizing the whole car

Dad rounds the corner to buy a moist towel
for his dash board

He says
Don't forget the steering wheel

I now try to imagine Jesus standing before me
He smiles and rays of light surround him
He glows brilliant white
He shows me His scars from hanging on the cross
and he weeps golden tears for the sins in our world
and animals circle the ground around his floating shadow

He is beautiful as ever
Standing in front of me

He speaks and harmony is His voice

"Wash thine car my son – For it is my bidding unto you"

and I do
I wash that car like it was the second coming of the Lord
I wash that car like it was the only way to get me into Heaven

and six dollars and fifty cents later

That car looks good
That car looks damn good

And Jesus says

"Good work my son
Now let's go get a burger"

immaculate conception

Molly Boyce

we noticed her protruding belly in the fall
of that year, when the apples fell and the
pumpkins smiled and the air was thick
with cinnamon and tarragon

we joked about the turkey fattening up
for the kill and rhymed some silly song
about a pig becoming a ham, but we didn't
know what we were saying

she walked around with thin lips and
sad eyes, Mary going to confessional, immoral
or all knowing, we often confused saints
and sinners back then

the Sisters tucked her under their wings
protecting with their habits the fledgling
who had flown too soon, fallen to the ground
and waited for grace to save

by Christmas, her plaid stripes stretched gaunt,
imprisoning her and impaling her with
arrows of condemnation and curiosity
in a land of innocent children

she was gone by New Year's Day, we whispered
but did not ask, afraid that we also would be
visited in our sleep, fall at the voice of God,
and end up just like her.

mellifluous

Nicole Lynn

constricted deceit
melts the borders of our fingertips
ice you
metal me
in the soft chill of your outside,
I allow myself to be alloyed
you let me slip my smooth self
across the brim of your body
distilling your relent
with the curves
of my surfaces
the easy rendezvous of us
sharp and painful
glowing with pride
I stray between your limits
you seep in
I freeze over
paralyze
poison



C. Carlin

Orion's Battle

Shannan Froelich

I watched as you rose out of the inky blackness,
Slowly assuming your place in the night sky.
The stars surrounding you seemed to meet the darkest
lines that laid the border
between earth and space.
They were the writing on the wall,
giving a preview of what would happen as the night
wore on.
You were perfect in form, all crisp lines and bright face.
I was entranced
as I gazed upon what you illuminated.
Then from the corner of my eye I caught a new set of
stars.
Coming out of the trees like an avenging warrior,
Orion, with his mighty belt,
started a battle for ownership of this night.
As the shadows deepened, and the night became
blackier,
He slowly drew back his bow.
With silent precision, he let loose the arrow that flew
across the dome of space
and penetrated your very heart.
From that moment on I watched you drop from the
heavens
As your once crisp lines became blurred
and your silvery brightness became dim,
he took your rightful place.
I mourned as you dropped to earth and the night
became empty again.

NOAH'S ARK

Jennifer Schradeya

rubber gloves, surgical tape
big pink q-tips
they stink of my regret

If my mother doesn't remind me, I'll forget

when I met you I ran
for two years I ran

I was scared of the tubes
the bandages, the medicines
they stink of my regret

If your pictures don't remind me I'll forget

but you knew me anyway
but you loved me anyway

you touched everyone you met
but me

PIXEL PIXIE

Lillie Vermillion

You don't impress me –
mere colored pixel pixie.
I don't wish I were you
in your size zero pants.
I don't wish I were you
with your pixel-boy romance.
You don't impress me –
mere colored pixel pixie.



S. Adams

raw

Nicole Lynn

I recall the felt-like mirage
of his skin against my whimsical,
sheet-stained body;
the emulsion, narrowed by heat
and friction and deceit,
left nothing to be discovered;
if nights would allow me to lean
against the walls of these memories,
the nakedness would reappear

Mixed Signals

Kelly Reichelderfer

They pass each other,
Wanting to know
What the other is thinking,
Where the other is going,
And why.

Mixed signals

They assume the other
Knows
What the other is thinking,
Where the other is going,
Automatically and telepathically.
Why?

Mixed signals

The first plans to slow its pace but
Continues going on a straight path
Without others' influences.
Ignorance

The second plans to veer to the left
To reach its destination or goal,
Failing to acknowledge that
Others are present and should be informed.
Arrogance

Mixed signals

They read the other's signals wrong.
It turns out they do not know
And end up colliding in a horrible accident

Since they did not give notice
Of thought or direction.
Why not?

Mixed signals

Pride of self-control,
Assumptions building up,
Maybe even something to hide.

Mixed Signals
Mixed signals

Mother and daughter.
Husband and wife.
Ever differing nations.
Two strangers driving,
Passing on the street,
Not thinking like they should
About where the future will go.

Mixed signals

Since they cannot pass or avoid each other
They decide to communicate:
Share what they are thinking,
Where they are going,
To avoid confusion and pain.

Fewer mixed signals; proceed with caution.

Never Saw It Coming

Claire Shipman

There is never time to think
about the banality of evil or
the evil that men do
Just enough time to get a second
cup of expired coffee
and check the fax
before Mr. Wrong glides
by wearing new
aftershave which trails along behind
him and then settles on me
Meanwhile my hard drive's humming
again and the sticky notes have
begun to overlap themselves
obscuring my monitor
I know nothing of what is
past, or passing, or to come
I know nothing but fluorescent lighting
and orange gum that in no way
takes away desire for nicotine or
anything else except maybe
orange gum
What could possibly be
more invasive than this phone
which rings even when I'm on it?



S. Benoit

EVER TANGLED IVORY ESSENCE

Lillie Vermillion

A
heavy mist hung over
the darkened trees.
Deep shadows haunted the jungle floor.
Whispers lurked upon every leaf.
Imagined movements danced beyond sight.
Then in a slow methodical chant,
Drums of nature beat their way closer:
The steady tread of an ancient beast.
In one majestic crush of foliage,
There stood the Fortress.
Twin ivory towers raised.
Mighty trumpet extended.
The gray fortress raised,
On two pillars of stone.
The trumpet thundered.
The fortress dropped,
The jungle shuttered.
The beast vanished.
Leaving a wake of waving branches.
Silence rang through the trees,
Stilling trembling leaves.
Echoing through the mist,
The shroud of things unseen,
The calling of a
king.



S. Day

At the Day's End

Sonya Day

Head resting on your collar,
Feeling the bristly prick of
Another sunrise and sunset's stubble
Press into my forehead,
Your arms tied round in lover's knot,
Like the grip of a familiar club

In the hands of an accomplished golfer –
Sure and steady, yet relaxed –
I wrap my legs in yours
and draw your warmth for my icy toes
As I listen to the thump, thump, thump
Of your heart telling me
I am loved.

Woody

Claire Shipman

do me a favor
and come on home
oh daddy
the lullabies still need
crooning and the
fascists still need whippin
coney island waits for you
in black and white

shuffle your feet
in the dusty drifts
of highway 66
play me some more
of your hobo poems
tilt your curly head
half close your eyes
and sing a worried song

THE LITTLE GIRL

Candy Land

The little girl's skirt ruffles as she sits down on the steps to the school, forgetting how cold the concrete always is as it hits her bottom. She had not felt so good for a couple of days now, and the school nurse was sending her home. As she sits and waits for her mother, she starts thinking about the other kids in the neighborhood and what made her feel so different. Her mind drifts back to the fourth grade class and the seven-letter word the teacher had written on the board, "SLAVERY." The teacher asked, "Does anyone know what this word means?" The little girl thought to herself, "Oh yes, I know what it means. It means that people just look at you from the outside not caring what is on the inside." At least that is how her Grandmother, whom she so affectionately calls "MaDear" had told her. She wanted to tell the kids in her class about her MaDear, but she somehow knew she could not. Because, you see, her momma is white and her step-dad is black and her momma had told her not to tell anyone ever. The day before, the little girl had been at the house of her best friend Leigh. Leigh was an interesting little girl with blonde hair and blue eyes. She wanted so much to be just like her momma. Her daddy was a drunk and Leigh always seemed to go the extra mile to avoid him. The little girl spent a lot of time at Leigh's house. This one day in particular she was telling Leigh that her daddy had been trying to touch on her while she was trying to sleep. Leigh said that it was okay because she was just a nigger and it did not matter what happened to niggers. The little girl looked at Leigh and thought for a minute and then she said, "But I look like you. I am white like you, and I try to be nice like you." Leigh just looked at her and said, "But you are not like me. You live with a nigger, so that makes you a nigger!" The little "nigger" girl ran home.

All the other children have left to go home, but the little nigger girl is still waiting for her momma. She is really feeling bad now. It is starting to get dark and she is feeling scared. She sees her momma across the street at the store and runs to meet her. Her momma hollers for her to get in the car and shut up. So that is what she does.

Time passes by, and the little girl has grown into a teenager. She waits for the bus. Her hands are sweaty and her face is hot. The bus comes to a stop. She steps on board and sits in the first seat she comes to because she knows she cannot sit in the back. The familiar black faces talk amongst each other while the white faces are hollering and throwing things from the bus. She does not dare talk to the black kids because the white kids will make fun of her, and she does not talk to the white kids because she is not as good as they are. All she knows is she is different. The bus comes to a stop, and she tries to focus on the back of the seat in front of her while the white boys and girls pass her by.

She remembers softball practice after school today as she grabs her books and stuffs them into her book bag. The metal seat is cold as she sits down. The coach is calling the starters' names. She listens, but her name is still not called. The coach announces that the team will be having a swim party. It will be this weekend. She cringes at the thought of going to the party. She has plenty of time to think about the party while warming the bench for the next hour and a half.

The water is cool and feels good on this hot summer day. As she swims around in the pool, one of the girls says, "Niggers are not allowed in my pool. You're a nigger lover." The teenage girl moves to the edge of the pool and pulls herself out of the water. She remains there for the duration of the party.

Oh, open your eyes.
Can't you see?
We are the same,
You and me.
People with thoughts
People with feelings
People who are the same,
You and me!

The young lady stands at the entryway to the stage. As she looks out into the audience, she sees many familiar faces. People mostly dressed in overalls and sundresses. She is nervous and tries to remind herself not to hold on to the right side of her gown, but she does it anyway, all the while trying to remember what the reason was for entering this beauty pageant. The reason was probably because her coach had told her that she had just as many accomplishments as anyone else and that she was just as pretty. The contestants enter the stage single file, and as the announcer calls out all of the names of the contestants, she sees her father, his male lover, and her brother enter into the cafeteria. They are all dressed in tuxedos and stick out like penguins in the rainforest. Then she walks to the front of the stage to have all of her accomplishments listed. Her father stands up and claps and hollers for her to win. She watches as most of the auditorium turns around to stare at him as if he has lost his mind. She wishes she could just turn around and run away.

She waits on the front steps of the high school for her father to pull the car around. One of the contestants walks by and mumbles, "Not only are you a nigger lover, but your daddy's a queer." She is not sure what the word "queer" meant. She just knows that once again she feels different inside from how everyone else seems to feel. She is confused because her outsides are like everyone else's, but her insides are definitely different.

She knows this because she has felt this way all of her life. The gown she is wearing suddenly feels bigger as her insides shrink.

The raindrops fall into her eyes as she sits on the stump in the middle of the clearing. These woods had been in her family for a long time and are adjacent to her grandparents' place. It is hard to tell the raindrops from the tears that are rolling down her face. She has come home once again to find the doors locked and the family sitting around the table eating. She has been told many times that no one has sent any child support and they can't afford to feed her. What has she done that is so bad? What makes those other kids worthy of being fed, but not her? She wonders as she sits alone. The sadness engulfs her and she suddenly feels a surge of anger from deep within. She does not know it at this time, but the damage that is being done now will be irreparable.

Look into her eyes and what
Do you see, but pain and hate
And misery.
No one to talk to,
In whom to confide,
She holds the truth deep inside:
We are all the same,
But the truth she must hide.

The woman holds the coffee cup as steady as she can, while trying to light a cigarette and walk to her seat. The room is filled with smoke and the smell of old nicotine from years past. She bows her head as the meeting is started with the Serenity Prayer. She hears her name as she is called upon to speak. The people clap as she walks to the podium. She says, "My name is Sarah and I am an alcoholic. I have had to learn a lot of lessons in my life. Some of the lessons were learned the hard way and some were learning experiences that were not so tough to get through. I have learned that no one can hurt me unless I let them, and that no one is any better or less than me. This is important because I did suffer from 'I'm a piece of crap' syndrome at one time in my life. Today I know that I am no different from anyone else. The years I spent comparing my insides to everyone else's outsides were wasted. Today I do not have to apologize for my family. My father was gay and my step-dad is black. My father contracted AIDS and died. I am okay with these facts today. I do not have to hide. These differences make me similar to the suffering people who continue to walk through this door of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have learned to look for the similarities instead of the differences, just like I believe God does when he looks at us. He looks at us as if we are all the same. As tears begin to swell up in her eyes, she says, "I am here not only because I am an alcoholic, but because you are the only people who never said that I don't belong here, or that I should go away. You love me because of who I am on the inside and you do not judge me because of where I come from or who my parents are. I do not have to be rich or wear the nicest clothes or pretend I am somebody I'm not. You just love me."

When Summer Comes

Anne West

Summer comes
coaxed and caressed
by Spring's breezy assurances

Summer comes balmy
and still

a sleepy foil for
the riotous frantic blossom-filled
exuberance of Spring

Summer comes
in repose
languid and lazy

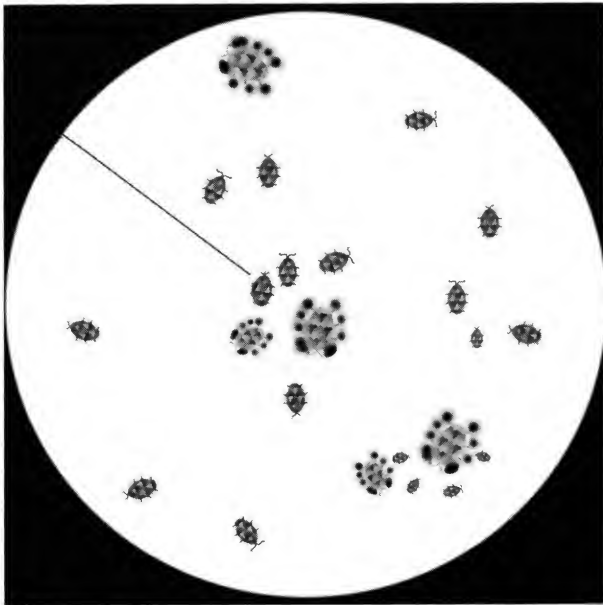
sensual
as melting ice
on sun-warmed skin...

and
sloppy waves kissing a sandy shore
surging and receding
surging

and receding



C. Carlin



P. Bellab

A New Testament

George Henson

My old image of **Christ is gone:**

long flowing hair,
Semitic beard,
and nail-scarred hands,
testament of His suffering for
humanity.

Now I see him
dressed in fire-fighting gear,
soot-covered face,
tear-filled eyes,
and strong, calloused hands,
walking among crumbled buildings,
a testament of His humanity for the
suffering.

Kingsville, 1970

George Henson

Éramos niños y nada más.¹

We ran down narrow *caliche*² streets,
where passing Coca-Cola trucks raised clouds of dust,
leaving in their wake *gritos y toses*³
and stinging eyes, and bead necklaces
around tiny sweat-soaked necks,
necklaces that would disappear
in every bathtub in the *barrio*⁴ by 10 p.m.

(That's 9 on school nights.)

Beneath flickering street lights and dancing fireflies
we played *al escondite*⁵,
hiding behind *el vecino*'s⁶ Rambler bought new in 1965,
*correteando*⁷ between cookie-cutter houses
and old beat-up garbage cans,
stopping only long enough to buy *raspados*⁸
at don Cenaide's *chiringuito*⁹
on the corner of *la calle Ella*¹⁰,
sometimes raspberry, *y a veces de fresa*¹¹.

And while *los viejos*¹² played dominos
and smoked cigars on front porches,
*las abuelas*¹³ swept the caliche dust
that floated in through open windows
from once-red linoleum floors,
now faded from daily moppings
with no *sé cuántos*¹⁴ gallons of Clorox.
It's funny how bleach erases everything but memories.



S. Starr

¹We were children and nothing more.

²salt peter: used, instead of asphalt, as a road filler in barrio neighborhoods

³shouts and coughs

⁴neighborhood

⁵hide-and-seek

⁶the neighbor's

⁷running around

⁸snow cones

⁹stand

¹⁰Elle Street

¹¹and sometimes strawberry

¹²the old men

¹³the grandmothers

¹⁴I don't know how many

PIECE OF CAKE

Sonya Day

"Just don't talk," the doctor had said.
I did rather well as I lay in my bed.
But as morning came with its tangerine glow
I soon figured out it was often not so.

I uttered "goodbye" before I could think
To my husband leaving as I perched near the sink
doing dishes. there, I cried out in pain
As a knife, playing Satan, plunged through a vein.
Little Abby joined, too, in all of the fun.
I called out to her when she started to run
Way down the drive s the phone chirped its song.
I answered "hello" before realizing the wrong.
My pitiful accompaniment to the car radio
Abruptly ended with a van, going slow,
Cutting me off. It left no other choice
Than for me to express a few select words by voice.
I answered my son when he asked, "How'd you know?"
Waiting until the hundredth time in a row,
I replied "Cause I'm smart," with the last of my might.
But if I really were, I'd keep my big yap shut tight.

So I procured the duct tape and tore off some scraps
And bound my two lips to eliminate lapse.
To insure my hands would steer clear of my face,
I wrapped them behind me, sliding handcuffs in place.
The key was then plunged down deep in a glass
My toes tried to claim it 'till evening could pass.
Then my husband returned, asking as he sighed,
"How'd not talking go?" "Piece of cake,"
I replied.
Oops.



V. Amfibr

A New Lamentation for America

George Henson

World Trade Center and Pentagon,
your country remembers you.
You were monuments to American ingenuity
and democratic ideals,
steel and geometry made fragile
by cowardice and fire,
symbols of life and liberty,
tombs of innocence,
shrines of martyrdom,
altars of sacrifice,
towers once billowing upward,
then plummeting heroically to earth,
shattering serenity like panes of glass,
fracturing spirits like cymbals
crashing in terrorists' symphony,
testament of zeal and inhumanity,
as ash and dust fell on tear-filled faces
and broken bodies.

Fallen countrymen,
in Washington and Manhattan,
and heroes in the air,
we mourn you,
as a husband mourns his wife
raped by sub-human men;
we bow our heads in reverence;
we lament your torment and suffering;
we exalt your courage and bravery;
we honor your sacrifice and agony;
we glorify your memory;
we celebrate your life and death.

Americans, everywhere, wake up!
Cry out in united voice
and grieve in unrestrained measure!
Proclaim your sorrow,
not in a hushed whisper,
but in a deafening chorus!
Write new Lamentations!
Sing to your fallen heroes
like a plaintive mother who lulls
her ailing child to sleep!
Let the world hear our pain,
from lower Manhattan
to every corner of Afghanistan!
Civilized nations, join us in concert as we
remember forever our martyrs,
and lift them up in unending praise!

*On a poem by William Carlos Williams,
"This is Just to Say," 2002...George Henson*

I ate
the power bars
that were on
the counter

that you
were probably saving
for breakfast.

Forgive me.
I was so hungry
and exhausted after
I got home from gym.

11 SEPTEMBER 2001 (a song)

Matthew Ware Coulter

A
I remember
C
11 September
D C A
Two-thousand-and-one

A
The airplanes flew
C
A hijacked crew
D C A
Passengers, too—they're through

A
Thousands die
C
Smoke in the sky
D C A
From buildings tall—they fall

A
I watch in shock
C
Manhattan burns
D C A
People in tears—some cheer

A
Americans died
C
More than 1812
D C A
Or Bunker Hill, too—that's true

A
Revenge will come
C
Our lives will change
D C A
All this death—breeds death

A
Part of me died
C
Part of me cried
D C A
Part me tried—to know

A
I remember
C
11 September
D C A
Two-thousand-and-one



C. Ippolito



T. Keller

evanescent

Molly Boyce

me

laid bare,
spread among satin sheets
pointing north, south, east and west
encompassing the width and breadth of who i am
vulnerably exposed by time, place and circumstance,
my essence revealed

he,

incarnate usurper,
entwined around i lie
uniting with careful caressed kisses
unmerciful master of mind, mood and meter
contriving choreographer of this drowning dance,
his will superimposed

we,

melded bodies,
disregarding deeper desires
flamed by searing spirit's fiery touch
erroneously he ignites i with ancient ritual song
compromising the soul for one transitory solace dream,
our bond denied



D. Wood

the art of sculpting

Kelly Zelens

So delicate and intricate
A painstaking perfection
Of balance and symmetry.

Bottom to top
Slowly and carefully
Molding and smoothing
Away any imperfections.

Into the fire
To make a permanent
Impression



D. Wood



J. Fraker

Look Out for the Altars

Claire Shipman

If you ask me what's my passion,
my innermost delight,
the arc of whistling arrow
the clean strike into pumping heart
the righteous ending of a life
the mortals prayer for forgiveness
my blessing for another night

I should tell you there are rumors
of my supposed frigid nature
the icy way I treated gods
the hounds sent on their trail
the scorn heaped on peeping Acteon
the delicious irony of gossip
my sensuality disguised



S. Benoit

The Devolution of Fire

George Henson

The Hebrews burned lambs on ancient altars.
The Inquisition burned heretics at the stake.
Mystics burned incense to meditate.
The vain burned bonfires in novels.
The melancholy burn candles at midnight.
The homeless burn trash to stay warm.

I burn logs in my fireplace,
not for sacrifice
or persecution,
not for ecstasy
or for plot,
not for nostalgia
or even warmth.

The mystery of my pyro-ancestors haunts me.



T. Keller

sometime

Kate Innocent

Sometime I would like
To fly on the wings
Of an angel, to know
The gauzy lengths of
Heaven.

Sometime I would like
To cry with the tears of
The justified, to know
The weary hours of
God.



D. Wood



T. Keller

Paint Me A Picture

Megan Flynn

Paint me a picture
A picture with greens and blues
You and I in the middle
Lying where we belong
Free as a bird
Falling in love
Add some pink so we can watch the sunset
Then fade into black and white diamonds in the sky
Paint our dreams with every vivid color
We'll wake up under a tree
Paint a waterfall of crystal clear
To wash away any fear
Add a bit of scarlet red for a final touch.



The Intention

Molly Boyce

Seen with human eye, man's form captivates
 An impressionistic brush of the artist's pose
 Shadows, angles sweep eased canvas
 Reflections of the outward man.

But man is not mere body that fascinates us so
 Made up of thought and vision and mystery.
 A spectrum of function from heart to toe
 A precise movement of beauty.

Then what constrains our body or soul,
 Immortality's brief glimpse into infinity?
 As mortals we are all born to die
 Why then are we mindful?

So, if our body travels from dust to dust,
 Our existence a sheer wisp of imagination,
 What purpose then is man's role
 In the creator's will and mind?

To live, to die under diverse adversity,
 Prove strength or digression of character,
 Share humanity's common ground,
 Experience both heaven and hell.

Timeless

Raymond DeSantis

Pressed down against the ocean floor,
 Her current pulls the waves ashore;
 If I could only hold her hand,
 I'd feel the pulse that runs this man.

Palms so warm my heart would flutter,
 Movement made from nerves she rudders;
 Meshing fingers curl and twine,
 To hold the polished gears of time.
 Two minds form a single band,
 To count the endless grains of sand;
 Ages pass the ticking knows,
 This watch she wound forever goes.

THE RELATIVITY OF ANCIENT MYTH

Cassandra Palo

Human beings are creatures of societies that create cultures so that people can function while thinking. Ironically, many of humanities' greatest thinkers were people who lived individual lifestyles – non-conformists. Symbols, such as language and numbers, have been used to pass culture through generations. With the evolution of man and thought has come an evolution of culture. Thus, people living in the twenty first century have inherited culture so complex and refined that it is impossible to say exactly where a culture's origins lie. However, by analyzing historical civilizations, one can find similarities to his or her own (Macionis 36-38).

The ancient civilization known today as classical Greece is famous for its contributions to modern society. Scholars throughout history have pondered over the complexities of Greek society during such an industrially primitive time of

history. The works of Homer were of great importance to classical Greece and are thus just as important to modern culture. In saying this, however, one creates questions that have no answers because no one can say who Homer was, where he

lived, exactly when he lived, and what his exact intent was when creating his epics. One can only speculate, then, as to why it is important for people to have passed the stories of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* for hundreds of centuries. It takes an incredible amount of cultural significance for a work of literature to pass the test of time; which leads one to the ultimate question: How does Homer's *Odyssey* relate to life in present times? The answer lies in creative interpretation – to seek out the ultimate pattern. If a philosophical theory was a painting, one must first create his canvas; in this case, one must know about the speculated origins of myth, Greek culture, and the importance of the epic poem to know the true beauty of the *Odyssey* – to interpret an ancient work into something relative to modern life.

Over time, many have heard the stories called Greek mythology. Yet, no one can say exactly why these stories originated, nor can anyone say, for certain, when they originated. The religion practiced by the ancient Greeks is no longer practiced, but holds such strong significance in modern culture that the colorful stories are still a large part of literature (Bullfinch 7). Many have speculated as to where the origins of mythology lie. Some respected philosophers thought, as

One can only speculate, then, as to why it is important for people to have passed the stories of Iliad and Odyssey for hundreds of centuries.

recently as a century ago, that the pagan myths were derived from the Bible (Bullfinch 276). This theory, however, ended with the discovery of carbon dating! Thomas Bullfinch, a learned member of Boston's elite at the turn of the nineteenth century, gives three more theories as to the origins of myth:

The Historical Theory

according to which all persons mentioned in mythology were once real human beings, and the legends and fabulous traditions relating to them are merely the additions and embellishments of later times. [. . .]

The Allegorical Theory

supposes that all the myths of the ancients were allegorical and symbolical, and contained some moral, religious, or philosophical truth of historical fact, under the form of an allegory. [. . .]

The Physical Theory

according to which the elements of air, fire, and water were originally the objects of religious adoration, and the principal deities were personifications of the powers of nature. (267-277)

It is important to keep in mind that no myth was written down until it was too late to find out the author's intent! Therefore, the anonymity of ancient myth leaves the modern intellectual a plethora of room in which to cogitate. The only known fact about ancient myth is that it has played a part in shaping the curriculum of every learned individual throughout western history. The greatest classical writers held in the highest literary esteem have alluded to mythology: Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer, Keats, Tennyson, etc. (Bullfinch). Mythology was an important part of Greek life, a cultural transmission of great importance to all of humanity.

Homer's *Odyssey* is the most important Greek cultural transmission, giving insight as to what the human condition of ancient times was. Thomas Blackwell, a Scottish linguist and thinker, studied Homer thoroughly and explains the difference between the ancient culture and that of his own by examining the ingredients of each culture's poetry. He contends that Homeric

poetry was judged by the use of “Encounters, Escapes, Rescues, and every other thing that can inflame the human Passions” (*qtd. in Grobman 188*). Homer’s mythology was regarded as absolute truth in ancient times, such as the Bible is believed to be in modern times. In Homer’s era, a bard was a well-respected member of society, much like the modern minister. A bard was well traveled, knowledgeable of his subject, and represented his people with objectivity. A translation of Homer’s language is much like the translation of Homer’s culture in that it has been refined and embellished over time (*Grobman 190-195*). The importance of Homer’s epic poems lies in the fact that they are stories still relative to modern times. As one literary critic writes, “The story of Odysseus traces, on an individual level, the same trajectory that ...[is] found in Western Civilization itself: the attempt to break free from mythology falls back

into mythology” (*Schmidt 833*). This leads one to a modern theory of how the story of the Odyssey relates to modern life, especially life in the United States.

With much consideration to coincidence, it is my theory that Homer’s Odyssey is a formula for life. The reasons why are that the cultural issues of Odysseus’ society are still relative at the present time. On an individual level, the Odyssey could be viewed as a standard formula of how to succeed in this world. As much as many people in the free world want to think the world they live in is more evolved, it really hasn’t changed much in the last few thousand years. Technology and industry have made the earth look different; disease has plagued many cultures, but underneath it all, the human condition is much the same as it always has been, and Odysseus’ lessons learned should be lessons to all people—even today. An interesting penetration

into the Odyssey is that it is much like a very complex mathematical equation in that it can be broken down and factored – especially by use of symbolism.

Along this line of thought is derived the following parallel to the Odyssey:

As the Trojan War (WWII) ends with the story of the Trojan Horse (nuclear bomb), Odysseus and his crew journey to return home. One of their first stops is the island of Kyklops (start of Cold War). Odysseus finds himself feeling trapped (McCarthyism) by the threatening giant, Polyphemus, and uses trickery to get him out of a tough situation. Odysseus blinds the giant, but doesn’t kill him. For this, the giant’s father Posiedon (Communist allies) sends Odysseus and his crew on a journey (conflicts America got into because of its stance on Communism) everywhere but home – to Penelope. (After WWII, women never returned home from the work place*, greed spread like a wildfire through America’s pockets, and our government leaders made more corrupt decisions than ever).

The next stop for Odysseus and crew is the island of cannibals (guerilla warfare, civil war world wide). Then, they go the island of Aiola, where Odysseus receives the gift of good wind (modern leaders who tried to bring about social renaissance), but temptation causes his crew to open it and keep them from returning home (assassinations of J.F.K.

**This is not in itself a bad thing, but no supervision in neighborhoods has caused a rise in delinquency and has created an atmosphere where some people are too busy to be neighborly or hospitable.*

Formulas for Characters:

Odysseus = America; (Government + Civilians) / (human flaw x industrialization)

Zeus = (Democracy + Capitalism) / Politics

Athena = (the Constitution, our rights and liberties) / Globalization

Penelope = America’s social conscience (moral+ values+ health)

Telemakus – America’s global perspective (foreign policy) - humility

Kyklops = Communism

Polyphemus = U.S.S.R.

and Martin Luther King Jr.). This causes a chaotic loss of hope in Odysseus and he begins to separate himself from much of his crew. The next stop is the island of Kirke. The first crew members to discover Kirke's lair are turned into swine (Bay of Pigs). Odysseus tricks Kirke into trusting him, so that he can use her to get his men back, as well as satisfy his desires with her sexual talents (power abuse in government). He goes back to camp and tells his men that it would be prosperous for them to go back and use Kirke's luxurious resources (Vietnam). At this, one of Odysseus' men retorts:

*'Where now, poor remnants? Is it devil's work you
long for? Will you go to Kirke's hall?
Swine, wolves, and lions she will make us all,
Beats of her courtyard, bound by her enchantment.
Remember those the Kyklops held, remember
shipmates who made that last visit with Odysseus!
The daring man! They died for his foolishness!
(10.466-72)*

(The preceding represents draft dodgers, war protests, and the loss of patriotism that resulted from our occupation of South Vietnam.) So, Odysseus and crew stay on the island of Kirke for a long time, only to accomplish nothing.

When Athena and Zeus decide they should send Odysseus on his way, the next stop for them is the underworld—for Odysseus must see the soothsayer Tiresius. The experience in the underworld is like a rebirthing experience for Odysseus—it is a chaotic time of enlightenment (the sexual revolution, feminist movement, political changes, civil rights movement, and a reinvented sense of culture). Odysseus also has to make a decision about which route he will choose to get home—Skylia or Kharybdis (Gov't either drops all morals, or keeps a few/ Nixon era...government shows how corrupt it's gotten). After the underworld, Odysseus' ships must pass the island

of the Sirens (mass media): sea nymphs who lure sailors to their deaths by the power of singing sweet songs. (The rise of mass media has caused as many problems as it has convenience: lack of parenting, mass morals/ values, opinionated media, filtered information, manipulated truths, violence, laziness, etc.) Odysseus ends up on the island of Kalypso—and I'm not sure he's left yet! Meanwhile, at home, the same men Odysseus helped in war are at his home, enjoying his food and wine, terrorizing his wife, and turning his slave girls into playmates. Some of the suitors are even from his homeland (deviance at home and abroad). When the suitors really start to threaten

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As much as many people in the free world want to think the world they live in is more evolved, it really hasn't changed much in the last few thousand years.

Telemakus' home, two eagles fly through the sky and rip the head off of a third unsuspecting bird (terrorist acts). Telemakus then journeys off to find his father.

My story ends here because I am not so sure America has united with its social conscience. While Odysseus is on the island of Kalypso, he mourns every day for Penelope, yet sleeps with Kalypso every night—like the way America has dealt with many humanitarian and/or social issues. There could be a countless number of ways, that by thinking sociologically, one can find parallels between Homer's *Odyssey* and life throughout

history. Odysseus was a hero with great will and strength, as well as an asset to his culture. Current events tell us that in spite of America's flawed history and character, it still, like Odysseus, has a larger than life impact on the rest of the world. Homer's imprint on society is present in every life of every civilized culture.

Quiet Walk

Robert Sturm

Scene in the corner

**Cut from eye
What is the view
I stand steadily by**

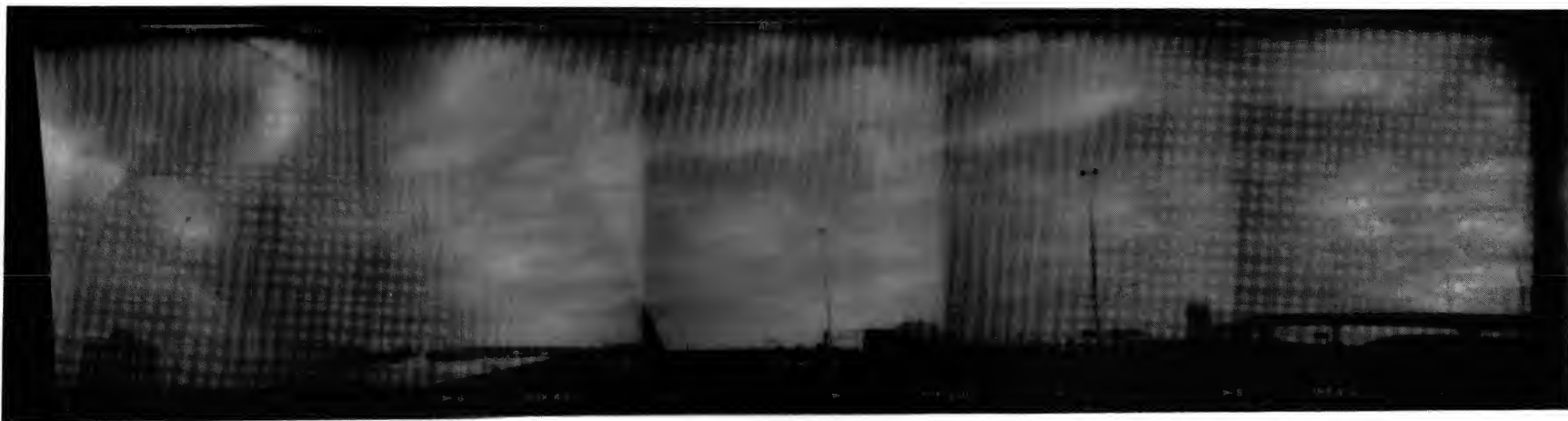
**Darkness emerges
I catch a glimpse
There is nothing to see
Says my mind to me**

**Something running
A stone, a dagger
Not alone
I stumble; I stagger**

**Blood in my hand
To floor I crash
The pain, the pain
Then I find the gash**

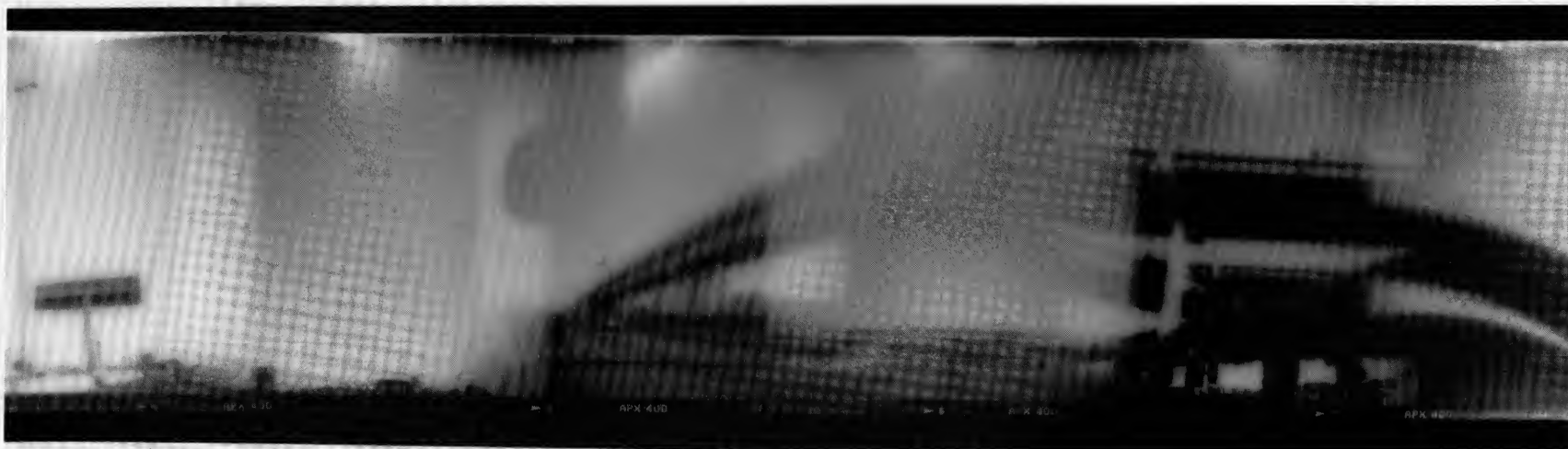
**Tear from my eye
Running amuck
Blinded by fear
Someone calls me queer**

**I begin to rise
As I feel their despise
A sudden thump
And a blow to the head
Killed by bigotry
I lay there dead**



abrupt

n. jones

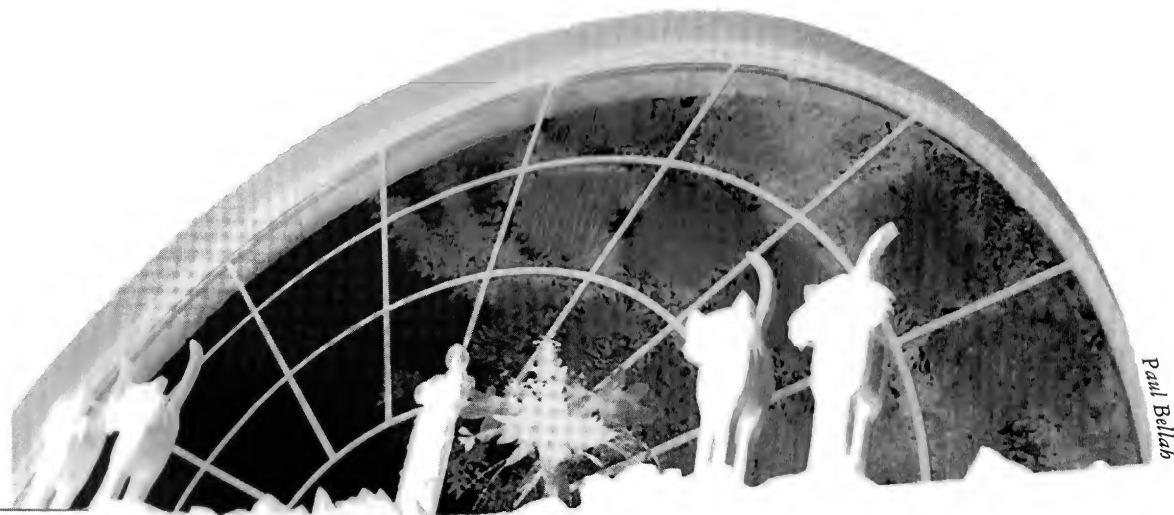


commotion

n. jones

SNOW DAY

Roxanne Geib



it's night outside

it's 10 in the morning and it's
night outside

I see the snow falling like
papery wind

but this snow's not melting,
and this snow's not cold

This snow is hot

I see the world melt like
a dust covered ghost

caused by a rippling crumple

and in the ashes and soot covered
night we search for the
lives we can
not find.



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